

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are pending in the present application, Claims 1, 2, 3, and 6-14 having been amended. Support for the present amendments is believed to be self-evident from the originally filed specification.¹ Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 13 and 14 were objected to; Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Ramos (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,174) in view of Mianzo et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0107017); Claims 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Ramos in view of Yuuki (U.S. Patent No. 6,390,036); Claims 4, 5, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Ramos in view of Yuuki, and further in view of Takeuchi et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0044403, hereinafter Takeuchi); Claims 6 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Ramos in view of Yuuki, and further in view of Sadamori (JP 08061405 A); and Claims 11-14 were objected to for depending upon a rejected base claim, but were otherwise indicated as including allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, Claims 11-14 are amended to be in independent form. Thus, Claims 11-14 are in condition for allowance.

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1 as unpatentable over Ramos and Mianzo, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 1 overcomes this ground of rejection. Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

initiating an inspection mode of the actuator;

¹ For example, see Applicants' Fig. 1, page 17, line 23 to page 18, line 11, and page 19, lines 15-22 of the specification.

displacing, while in the inspection mode, the movable portion from the normal position to a semi-operation position located between the normal position and the full actuation position;

maintaining the movable portion at the semi-operation position while inspecting the actuator without causing the movable portion to move to the full actuation position; and

causing the movable portion to move from the semi-operation position to the normal position without causing the movable portion to move to the full actuation position.

Ramos and Mianzo, when taken in proper combination, do not disclose or suggest every element of amended Claim 1.

Page 3 of the outstanding Office Action states “[the claims do] not require ‘the movable portion’ to move back and forth between ‘normal position’ and ‘semi-operation position’ only. Any actuator can be moved from one end through semi-position to another end....” The amendment to Claim 1 indicates that in an inspection mode, the movable portion is displaced from the normal position to the semi-operation position, and that the semi-operation position is maintained without causing the movable portion to move to the full actuation position. Then, the movable portion is caused to move from the semi-operation position to the normal position without causing the movable portion to move to the full actuation position. Thus, the movement to and from the semi-operation position in the method of Claim 1 is not merely moving from one end thru a semi-position to another end.

Ramos describes elevator brake with movable armature plate 4. Ramos does not describe moving armature plate 4 as Claim 1 describes the displacement of the “movable portion.” Moreover, Ramos does not disclose or suggest an inspection mode for armature plate 4.

Mianzo describes an electromagnetic valve actuator 10, with armature 36. Mianzo describes Fig. 1B as a “middle position.”² However, the valve head of Mianzo merely passes through the middle position and is not maintained at the middle position and then returned to its’ initial position. Mianzo does not describe moving armature plate 4 as Claim 1 describes the displacement of the “movable portion.” Moreover, Mianzo does not disclose or suggest an inspection mode for armature 36.

Since neither Ramos nor Mianzo disclose an inspection mode for their respective armatures, and neither describes the movement to a semi-operation position as described in amended Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art could not properly combine Ramos and Mianzo to arrive at the invention defined by Claim 1.

Thus, Claim 1 (and any claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Ramos and Mianzo, when taken in proper combination.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 3 overcomes the rejection based on the combination of Ramos and Yuuki. Amended Claim 3 recites, *inter alia*, “a controller that causes the feeder circuit to maintain the movable portion at the semi-operation until the controller issues a command that causes the feeder circuit to cause the movable portion to return to the normal position without causing the movable portion to move to the full actuation position.”

As characterized above, Ramos does not disclose or suggest at least this feature of amended Claim 7.

Yuuki does not cure the deficiencies in Ramos. Col. 1, line 21 to col. 2, line 12 of Yuuki describes that an armature is moved from one end to another. Yuuki does not describe moving its’ armature as Claim 3 describes the displacement of the “movable portion.”

² Mianzo, paragraph [0015].

Since neither Ramos nor Yuuki disclose the movement to a semi-operation position as described in amended Claim 3, Applicants respectfully submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art could not properly combine Ramos and Yuuki to arrive at the invention defined by Claim 3.

Furthermore, a person of ordinary skill would not look to Yuuki to modify the device of Ramos. Ramos pertains to an elevator brake. Yuuki pertains to an engine valve. The movement of an engine movement would be of know interest to a person skilled in the art of elevator brakes. The movement of an engine valve is not relevant to the movement of an elevator brake.

In view of the above-noted distinction, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 3 (and any claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Ramos and Mianzo, taken alone or in proper combination.

Furthermore, Takeuchi and Sadamori have been considered, but do not cure the above-noted deficiencies in Ramos, Yuuki, and Mianzo.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

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